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RESULTS OF THE EXAMINATIONS FOR APPROVAL FOR ORAL CREDIT; THE LICENSING OF TEACHERS OF MODERN LANGUAGES

By W. R. PRICE

UNDER this title there appeared in the January, 1917 issue of the Modern Language Journal an account, by Professor W. C. Decker (New York State College for Teachers), of the system of written and oral examinations of modern language teachers in the State of New York. The statistics, in part incorrect, were secured by Professor Decker from the files of the State Education Department. It seems to me that it may be of interest to readers of the Journal and perhaps to some State Education Departments to have the entire, correct statistical information concerning these examinations from the time of their inception in October, 1915, to the present date. These examinations are held twice a year, in October and in April. The candidate must secure at least 60% in the written examination and must, in addition, satisfy the Inspector, in the oral examination and the teaching test, that the minimum requirements as to pronunciation and fluency in the oral use of the foreign language and in modern methods of teaching are met, before approval by the State Education Department is issued. It should be said here that the papers for the written examination scheduled for April of each year are sent, on application, to all colleges and universities for the use of candidates for graduation in June following this date. Some of these candidates are looking forward to teaching in New York State; others are subjected to the examination by the professors in charge merely that an extra-mural test with standardized rating may be applied to them.

It will be noted that there is wide variation in the per cent of the papers written accepted by the Department; also that the per cent passing in Spanish from October, 1917 to October, 1919 is rather large. The first fact is explained by a variety of causes, such as variation in the difficulty of the examinations (they are

made out by committees appointed by the State Examinations Board), variation in the standard of rating, character of the applicants (whether they are from the larger and better schools or from the smaller and poorer schools, or whether they are experienced teachers or candidates for graduation from college, etc.). The second fact is explained readily enough by saying that the Spanish papers were 'farmed out' up to October 1919, many of them were passed undeservedly, measured by the same standard as the French and German teachers, especially in April, 1919. This discrepancy has since been attended to, as will be seen by the statistics for October 1919.

In his article, Professor Decker raised the question as to how greatly this system of licensing teachers had improved the character of the teaching and the resultant product, the pupils' mastery of the subject. There is no doubt whatever that the general level of modern language teaching in the State has been raised considerably, but the problem has been complicated by the collapse of German in our schools and the introduction of Spanish. Before the war about 75% of the pupils in the State enrolled in modern language courses were studying German; the rest, French (for the number taking Spanish in secondary schools was negligible). Since the collapse of German, the number of pupils electing French has increased considerably, while the gain in Spanish is very small in up-State schools (the increase in Spanish is confined almost wholly to New York City, where now, *mirabile dictu*, over 25,000 pupils are enrolled in Spanish, about 20,000 in French, while Latin comes third with about 15,000). Undoubtedly German was the best taught of all foreign languages in the State of New York when public sentiment, fanned into a flame of white heat against everything German, threw it bodily out of our schools. This is not the time or the place to enter into a discussion as to the justifiability of the ostracism of the German language (students of history know that Latin was forbidden in Carthaginian schools at the time of the Punic wars!), but the fact that modern language teaching is now in a veritable slough of despond is worthy of note: we are, in reality, just where we were twenty years ago, in the matter of the special preparation of modern language teachers.

Statistics follow:—

Date		Number Written	Number Accepted	Per Cent Accepted	Number Accepted 60-74	Number Accepted 75-89	Number Accepted 90-100
Oct. 1915....	French	70	52	74.2	17	18	17
Oct. 1915....	German	142	78	54.9	45	23	10
Apr. 1916....	French	55	34	61.8	19	10	5
Apr. 1916....	German	129	67	51.1	38	21	8
Oct. 1916....	French	38	28	73.6	4	14	10
Oct. 1916....	German	96	51	53.1	32	15	4
Apr. 1917....	French	90	56	62.2	38	12	6
Apr. 1917....	German	144	122	84.7	37	48	37
Oct. 1917....	French	42	24	57.1	13	8	3
Oct. 1917....	German	79	41	51.8	21	14	6
Oct. 1917....	Spanish	16	12	75	5	7
Apr. 1918....	French	94	54	57.4	30	13	11
Apr. 1918....	German	92	60	65.2	32	18	10
Apr. 1918....	Spanish	17	15	88.2	5	7	3
Oct. 1918....	French	36	18	50	6	7	5
Oct. 1918....	German	9	4	44.4	2	2
Oct. 1918....	Spanish	5	4	80	1	3
Apr. 1919....	French	74	46	62.1	22	17	7
Apr. 1919....	German	32	27	84.3	6	10	11
Apr. 1919....	Spanish	25	23	92	6	14	3
Oct. 1919....	French	94	29	30.8	9	8	12
Oct. 1919....	German	6	5	83.3	5
Oct. 1919....	Spanish	16	7	43.7	2	3	2

*State Department of Education,
Albany, N. Y.*